

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously presented) An apparatus for applying the heat-transfer label of a heat-transfer label assembly onto an object, said apparatus comprising:

a. a decorating unit for applying the heat-transfer label onto the object, said decorating unit comprising a heated contact plate which includes an elongated flat contact surface, said heated contact plate being adapted to pivot during label transfer so that the elongated, flat contact surface of the heated contact plate continuously urges the heat-transfer label into contact with the object; and

b. a conveying mechanism for advancing and supporting the object during label transfer.

2-3. (Canceled).

4. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the contact plate comprises a heating plate and a rubber layer mounted on said heating plate.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the rubber layer which is constructed of an 80 durometer silicone.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the heated contact plate includes a covering mounted on the rubber layer, the covering being constructed of a 0.10 inches thick layer of TEFLON fiberglass cloth.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein said heated contact plate is heated to a temperature of approximately 450 degrees Fahrenheit.

8. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 7 wherein said decorating unit further comprises an elongated heated preheater for heating the heat-transfer label before label transfer.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said conveying mechanism is in the form of a turntable which is continuously rotationally driven about a vertical axis.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 further comprising a plurality of support disks mounted on conveying mechanism, each of said plurality of support disks being sized and shaped to support and object.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein each of the plurality of support disks is shaped to rotate relative to said conveying mechanism.

12. (Previously presented) A decorating unit for applying the heat-transfer label of a heat-transfer label assembly onto an object, said decorating unit comprising:

a. a preheater for heating the heat-transfer label assembly before label transfer;

b. a heated contact plate which includes an elongated, flat contact surface, said heated contact plate being adapted to pivot during label transfer so that the elongated, flat contact surface of the heated contact plate continuously urges the heat-transfer label into contact with the object;
and

c. a transport assembly for advancing the heat-transfer label assembly from said preheater to said heated contact plate.

13-14. (Canceled).

15. (Previously presented) The decorating unit of claim 12 wherein said heated contact plate includes a rubber layer which is constructed of an 80 durometer silicone.

16. (Original) The decorating unit of claim 15 wherein said heated contact plate includes a covering mounted on the rubber layer, the covering being constructed of a 0.10 inches thick layer of TEFLON fiberglass cloth.

17. (Original) The decorating unit of claim 16 wherein said heated contact plate is heated to a temperature of approximately 450 degrees Fahrenheit.

18. (Currently amended) An apparatus for applying the transfer label of a transfer label assembly onto an object, said apparatus comprising:

a. a decorating unit for applying the label onto the object, said decorating unit comprising a contact plate which includes an elongated, flat contact surface, said contact plate including a pivot point, said pivot point being located within said contact plate along its length about which ~~the, said~~ contact plate is being adapted to pivot about said pivot point during label transfer so that the elongated, flat contact surface of the contact plate continuously urges the transfer label into contact with the object; and

b. a conveying mechanism for advancing and supporting the object during label transfer.

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19. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the heated contact plate includes a pivot point along its length about which the heated contact plate is capable of pivoting.

20. (Currently amended) The decorating unit of claim 12 wherein the heated contact plate includes a pivot point, said pivot point being located within said contact plate, said ~~along its length about~~ which the heated contact plate being adapted to pivot about said pivot point ~~is capable of pivoting.~~

21. (Canceled).

22. (Previously presented) An apparatus for applying the heat-transfer label of a heat-transfer label assembly onto an object, said apparatus comprising:

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a. a decorating unit for applying the heat-transfer label onto the object, said decorating unit comprising a heated contact plate which includes a contact surface extending nearly its entire length, said heated contact plate being adapted to pivot during label transfer so that the contact surface of the heated contact plate continuously urges the heat-transfer label into contact with the object; and

b. a conveying mechanism for advancing and supporting the object during label transfer.
